

The Cross

· ANCIENT ·
· AND ·
· MODERN ·





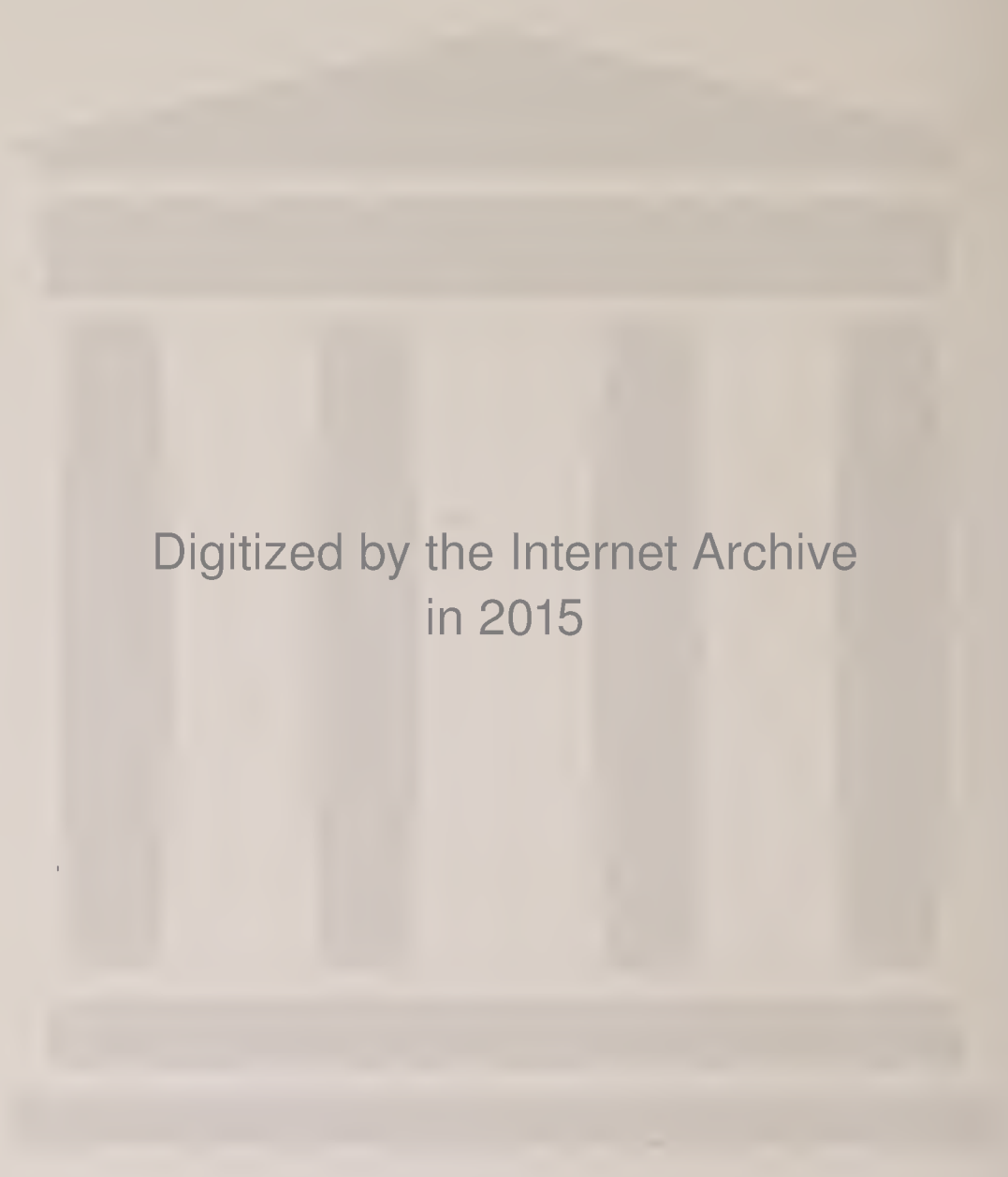
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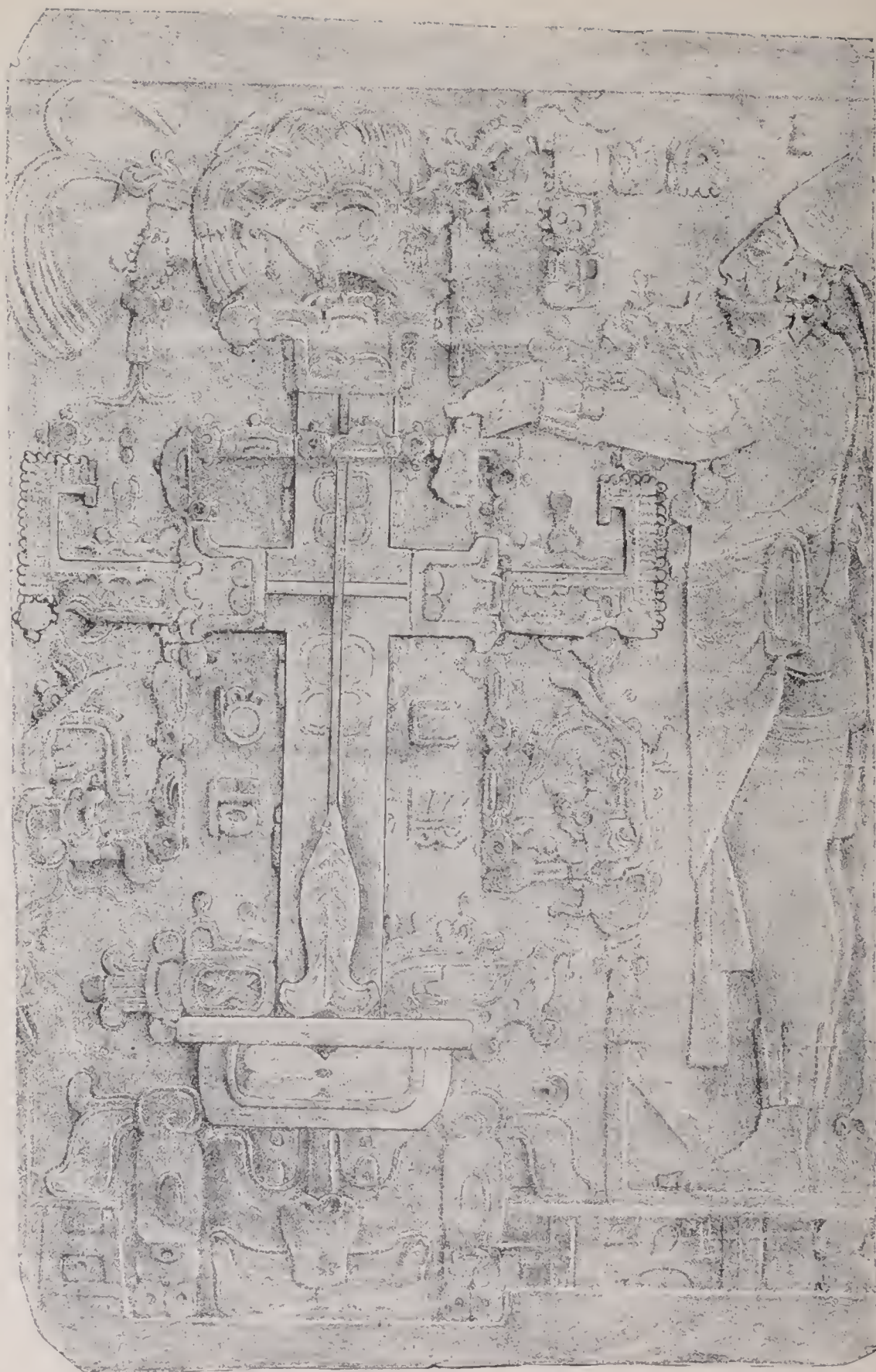
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THE CROSS, ANCIENT AND MODERN.



MURAL TABLET IN THE TEMPLE OF THE CROSS.

The Cross,
ANCIENT AND MODERN.

BY

WILLSON W. BLAKE.



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I.

The Cross in the Orient.

THE CROSS.

I.

In the Orient.

CHRIST, crucified on the tree, died to save sinners. For nearly nineteen centuries the sacred symbol has indicated redemption to fallen humanity. But centuries previous to his self-sacrifice the cross had been known to all peoples and in all lands. Let us briefly trace its development as it appears shining through the mists of former ages. Going back to what may be appropriately called semi-historic times, we find the mystical figure among the hieroglyphs of antiquity.

Among the early Aryan nations the cross was an object of adoration. With them it was represented as in Fig. 1, and called *arani*. Its two arms were named *pramatha* and *swastika*. They were merely two pieces of wood with handles, and by rubbing together they kindled the sacred fire, *agni*. From *pramatha* comes the Grecian myth of Prometheus,



Fig. 1.
ARANI.



Fig. 2.

AGNI.

who stole the fire of heaven from Zeus in a hollow staff and kindled the divine spark of life in man formed of clay. Hence in worshipping the cross, the Aryans were but worshipping the element fire. This element—as sparks issuing from the cross—is still more fully expressed in Fig. 2.

The Vedic story is that the father of the sacred fire was called *Twastri*; that is to say, “Divine Carpenter.” He was the creator of the *swastika* and the *pramatha*, whose reciprocal friction produced the divine son, Agni. In his interesting work upon the Origin of Fire, Adelbert Kuhn designated both Figs. 1 and 2 under the title of Arani, and beheld them as religious symbols of our ancestors, the Aryans.

In the disks of baked clay met with in such abundance by Dr. Schliemann in the excavations of ancient Ilium, are frequently figured the two forms of the cross above shown,—whence has been deduced the conclusion, very natural, that the Trojans were of Aryan filiation. On these same disks is also often found the peculiar cross of Fig. 3, which is apparently analogous to the others.

Fig. 3.
TROJAN CROSS.Figs. 4 and 5.—FUTURE
LIFE.

Justus Lipsius, in a quaint old treatise upon the Cross, published in Paris in 1598, speaks of it as found in the inscriptions of Egypt, and as meaning “Future Life” (Figs. 4 and 5). The most common name among the Egyptians for the cross was *canob*, from the god Canopus.

Champollion, the great French archæologist, — who discovered the true key to the Egyptian hieroglyphs by means of the trilingual inscription on the Rosetta Stone, — gives, in one of his works published in Paris in 1828, three additional



Figs. 6, 7, 8. — DIVINE LIFE

variations of the handled cross (Figs. 6, 7, and 8), with the general interpretation of "Divine Life."



Fig. 9.
CROSS OF
HORUS.

A similar cross (Fig. 9) is often seen engraved on the ancient sepulchres of Egypt. It is the symbol of life, and represented as borne in the hands of the god Horus. It has been called the sacred *tau*, or *Crux ansata*.

Fig. 10 is a priest of Horus wearing the cross on his vestments. Antiquarians give the figure a date of fifteen centuries before the Christian era. In Greece Horus was called Bacchus.



Fig. 10. — PRIEST
OF HORUS.

In Figs. 11 and 11½ the bacchanalian god is shown with his head-dress decked with crosses. He was adored, under the symbol of a cake of flour (Fig. 12), as early as the year 1225 B.C. in the city of Thebes, Greece, where his cult was established by Cadmus, whose son was the chief of the Seven Heroes of Greece. Two of these cakes were found in the

ruins of Herculaneum, which was destroyed in the year 79 A. D. In Egypt these cakes bore the symbols of Seb, the father-god,



Fig. 11. — BACCHUS, WITH CUP AND BRANCH.



Fig. 11½. — HEAD OF BACCHUS.



Fig. 12. — CAKE OFFERED TO BACCHUS.

Isis, the mother-god, and Horus, the son-god, and were made of flour, salt, honey, oil, and wine. Reference is made to this worship in the Bible (Jeremiah vii. 18).

The Bel, Baal, or Beelzebub of the Bible, in his character of sovereign or king, is the god Tammuz of Babylon. He is called the "hammer" in prophecy (Jeremiah i. 23). The Tyrians worshipped him by the sign of the cross, or hammer, of Figs. 14 and 40. Singular to note, Fig. 14 is also in Scandinavian mythology the mark of Thor, the son of Odin and Freya, and the god of thunder, from whose name Thursday (Thor's

day) is derived. Bel is a Chaldaean word, meaning "heart." Further to identify Bel with Tammuz, we see in Babylonish inscriptions the latter signified by a heart, from which springs a single or double cross (Fig. 13). To make the connection more evident, the heart is frequently found painted red.



Fig. 13. — HEART OF BEL.

Holmboe, in his work, published thirty years ago, on the Traces of Buddhism in Norway, says that the cross of singular form (Fig. 14) seen on rare Hindoo coins is likewise encountered on many ornaments of gold found in Scandinavian excavations. Very notable is this cross, not only because its use was general, but for the salutary effect attributed to it, especially by the Buddhists. Patterson, who wrote in 1798, says that this is the *cumbh* of the Hindoos.



Fig. 14.
SCANDINAVIAN
CROSS.

The mystical "Good Omen" (Fig. 15) familiar to many Hindoo sects differs from Fig. 1, since its arms turn from left to right, instead of from right to left. It appears on the oldest medallions of the Buddhists, and the greater part of the inscriptions seen engraved



Fig. 15.
GOOD OMEN.

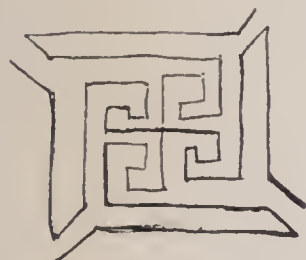


Fig. 16. — LABYRINTH OF
GOOD FORTUNE.

upon the walls of their ancient caverns are preceded or followed by this sacred mark. It is also found in China, with a significance similar to that assigned to it in India.

The labyrinthine design of Fig. 16 also is a symbol of good fortune. It was the ground-plan of a certain class of sacred edifices of the Brahmas, who called it *vandavartaya*.

The only difference between the cross of Fig. 1 and that of Fig. 17, the *ouan*, is that the arms of the latter are shorter. The *ouan* is considered by the Buddhists as one of their most important figures among the sixty-five which they imagine they see in the footprint of Buddha. The biography of Hiouen-Tsang mentions a rock with these prints, and states that at the extremities of the ten toes are seen flowers terminating with the mystical sign of Fig. 17. Father Hyacinthe says that the women of Thibet adorn their dresses with this cross. According to M. Pallas, the Mongolians draw it on pieces of paper, which they place on the breast of the dead. In Hindostan, says Taylor in his Dictionary, this figure, under the name of *sethia*,



Fig. 17.
CROSS OF
HINDOSTAN.

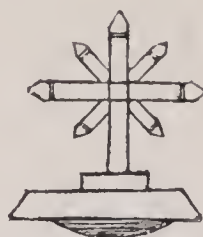


Fig. 18. — BUDDHIST CROSS.

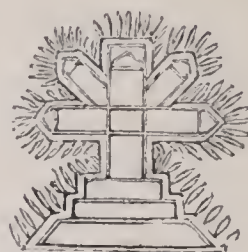


Fig. 19. — BUDDHIST CROSS.

was marked on the ground with flour during marriage-feasts and other ceremonies. The Vaishnavas, in their worship of Vishnu, make use of a sacred vase, marking it with the same figure. Figs. 18 and 19 are elaborate forms of Buddhist crosses found to-day throughout Thibet.

The Saivas mark their sacred vases with a double triangle (Fig. 20). The upright pyramid signifies Siva, who, with these three points, unites in himself the attributes of purity, truth,

and justice. The inverted triangle is his consort, Sati, with the same characters and attributes. An exact copy of this double triangle is found in the temple of the Sun, among the ancient ruins of Uxmal, Yucatan, sculptured in stone.



Fig. 20 — SIVA AND SATI.



Fig. 21. — JANTRA.



Fig. 22. — MERCURY.

The Hindoo worshippers of Sacti, the female principle in Nature, mark their vases with the arrow-like sign, *jantra* (Fig. 21). It is a hieroglyph encountered throughout India in great variety.

With Fig. 22 the Egyptian astronomers denoted Mercury in the signs of the Zodiac. The circle represented the diffusion of the Divine Mind in the sidereal world, and the cross the diffusion of the elements.

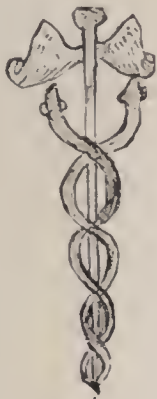
Fig. 23
CADUCEUS.

Fig. 23 is the caduceus, or Mercury's rod, — a wand entwined by two serpents and surmounted by two wings. The ancient poets attributed wonderful powers to it. On medals the caduceus is a symbol of good conduct, peace, and prosperity. The rod represents power; the serpents typify wisdom; and the two wings, diligence and activity.

Fig. 24.
EGYPTIAN
CROSS.

The figure known in heraldry as the Egyptian cross is given in Fig. 24. Larrainzar says that this is but a variation of the *canob* (Figs. 4 to 8), which the Egyptians considered as an emblem of the

inundations of the Nile. The *canob* was an instrument for measuring the progress of the annual rise of the sacred river. The life and prosperity of the nation were entirely dependent upon this overflow. It is not surprising, therefore, that in time the sign of this measuring rod came to be considered as a deity to whom worship must be rendered.

The cross as an instrument of capital punishment was used in the time of Abraham. Nimrod, the founder of Nineveh, suspended from it Tarno, or Tarin, king of Media,



Fig. 25.
HAMAN'S GAL-
LOWS.

according to the testimony of Diodorus the historian. As a gibbet it was known to the Persians, Egyptians, Africans, Macedonians, Greeks, and Romans. The gallows of Haman, fifty cubits in height, was but a cross (Fig. 25).



Fig. 26.
SAMSI-VUL.

Samsi-Vul, the king of Persia who ruled in the year 850 B. C., wore a cross pendent from his neck as an act of worship to his god (Fig. 26). This cross is similar to that found in recent excavations at Athens (Fig. 27).



Fig. 27.
GREEK CROSS.

The images of the goddess Diana of the Ephesians (Fig. 28) show that in the time of Paul she

bore a Christian cross on her head, a Moslem crescent on her left, and the Hindoo star on her right.

The cross and crescent were combined in the Oriental standards (Fig. 29) centuries before the time of Christ.

Roman coins of the period of 269 B. C. show the cross of



Fig. 28. — DIANA OF THE EPHESIANS.

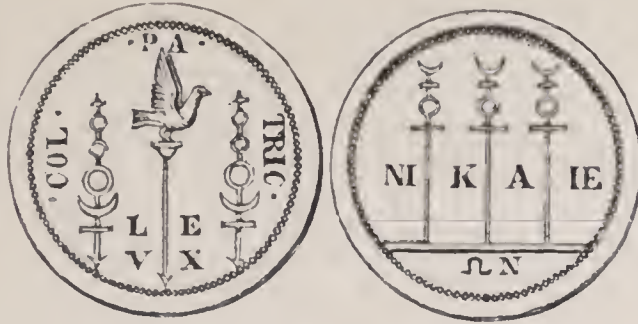


Fig. 29. — ORIENTAL STANDARDS.

and Constantine, being unable to vary the banner of the Empire, added "XP," the Greek sign for Christ, to the imperial flag,

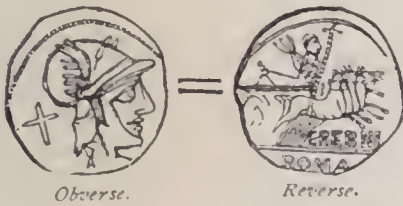


Fig. 30. — ROMAN COIN, WITH CROSS OF SATURN.

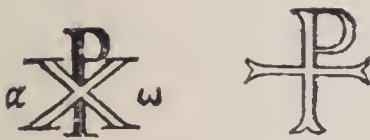


Fig. 32.

LABARUM OF CONSTANTINE.

sides, cut and trimmed it so as to form a giant cross. On its trunk the *T* was also repeatedly engraved.

312 A. D (Fig. 31.) In dedicating anything to the service of Christ, the forms used were as in Fig. 32.

The Druids adored the tree as a symbol of their god. They generally selected a state-ly oak in the forest; and leaving two large branches on opposite



Fig. 31.

LABARUM OF CONSTANTINE

In hoc Signo vincis

On the 5th of February, 1537 A.D., the Japanese crucified a Franciscan missionary, Felipe de Jesus, a native of Mexico, on a cross similar to Fig. 33. He was fastened to the wood by means of iron rings placed around his neck, wrists, and ankles. This was the first Mexican saint, and the font in which the Indian martyr was baptized is still preserved with honor in the great cathedral of the city of Mexico.



Fig. 33.
JAPANESE CROSS.



Fig. 34.
LATIN
CROSS.



Fig. 36.
CROSS OF
SAINT ANDREW.

Thus the cross has been known by the different peoples of the Old World from the most remote antiquity. Used by the Romans as a method of ignominious punishment, and for the purpose of striking terror into the bands of thieves that infested the various provinces of the Empire, it was converted into the holy Tree of Salvation by the death of the Saviour. The principal forms of the Christian cross are the Latin (Fig. 34), *Crux Commissa*; the Greek (Fig. 35), *Crux Immissa*; and the cross of Saint Andrew and Saint Patrick (Fig. 36), *Crux Decussata*. On this last cross the patron saint of Scotland suffered martyrdom.



Fig. 35.
GREEK
CROSS.

Let us look at some of the variations of these leading forms.

In the Church of Rome the simple Latin Cross is carried before bishops; the Double Cross, called in heraldry the Patriarchal (Fig. 37), is carried before cardinals and archbishops; and the Triple Cross (Fig. 38) is carried only before the Pope. The Maltese

Cross (Fig. 39) is but an eight-cornered variation of the Greek, and the Cross of Jerusalem (Fig. 40), or Cross Potent of heraldry, is still another style of the Greek.



Fig. 37.
PATRIARCHAL
CROSS.



Fig. 38.
TRIPLE CROSS.

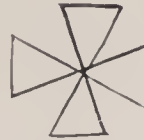


Fig. 39.
MALTESE CROSS.



Fig. 40.
CROSS OF
JERUSALEM.

The cross in heraldry varies so much that Menestrier counts forty-two forms, Guillim thirty-nine, and La Colombière seventy-two. Fig. 41, often seen on the escutcheons of ancient and noble families everywhere in Europe, is the Latin Crosslet, one of the most beautiful forms of architecture. Fig. 42 is the Greek form of the Crosslet. Fig. 43 is the Clèche, a variety of the Greek cross charged with another cross of the same figure, but of the color of the field. Fig. 44 is the Cross Corded, of which there are some notable examples in heraldry. The Cross Bottony (Fig. 45) has each arm terminating in three buds, knots, or buttons, — according to Burke, — resembling in some measure the three-leaved grass. The Cross Pattee (Fig. 46) has arms very narrow at the inner, and very broad at the outer end. The Pall (Fig. 47) imitates the form of the consecrated vestment worn by ecclesiastics, and has somewhat the appearance of the letter Y. The Saltier (Fig. 48) is the Saint Andrew's Cross in heraldry, and one of the greater or honor-

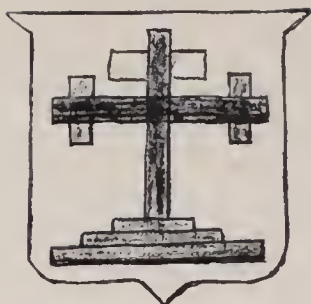


Fig. 41. — LATIN CROSSLET.

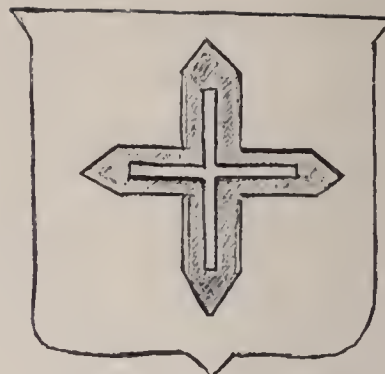
Fig. 42.
GREEK CROSSLET.

Fig. 43. — CROSS CLÈCHE.

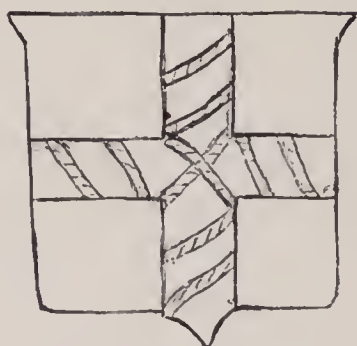


Fig. 44. — CROSS CORDED.

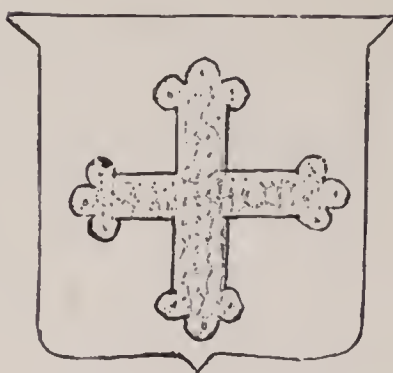


Fig. 45. — CROSS BOTTONY.

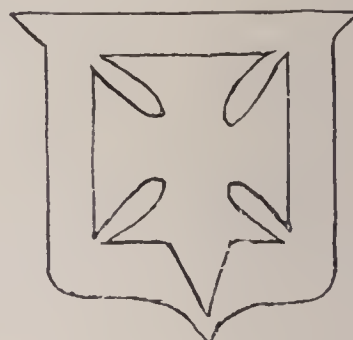


Fig. 46. — CROSS PATTEL.

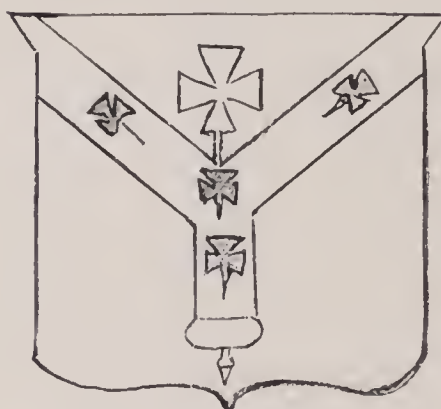


Fig. 47. — THE PALL.

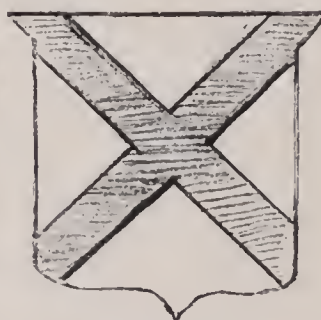


Fig. 48. — SALTIER.

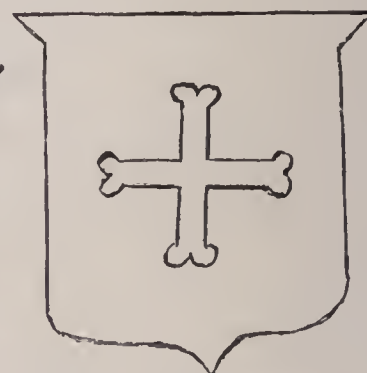


Fig. 49. — CROSS POMMÉE.



Fig. 50. — CROSS FOURCHÉE.

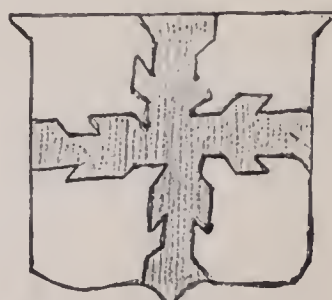


Fig. 51. — CROSS RAGUÉE.

able ordinaries. The Cross Pommée (Fig. 49) has the arms terminating in rounded protuberances resembling apples. The Cross Fourchée (Fig. 50) has the arms forked or branched, and the ends of the branches terminating abruptly, as if cut off. The Cross Raguled (Fig. 51) is jagged or notched in an irregular manner. The above examples in heraldry are sufficient for purposes of illustration.

One of the most interesting specimens of caricature which the ruins of classic cities have disclosed was found in 1857 upon the wall of a narrow Roman street, which was closed up and shut out from the light of day about A. D. 100 to facilitate an extension of the imperial palace. The wall when uncovered was found scratched all over with rude caricature drawings in the style of the specimen given (Fig. 52). This one immediately arrested attention, and that part of the wall on which it was drawn was carefully removed to the Collegio Romano, in the museum of which it may now be inspected. The Greek words scrawled upon the picture may be translated thus: "Alexamenos is worshipping his god." This would indicate that the picture was aimed at some member, to us unknown, of the despised sect of Christians. It is the only ancient



Fig. 52.

CARICATURE OF A CHRISTIAN.

allusion to Christianity to be found on the walls of old Italian cities.

The famous Singanfu inscription is the most remarkable, if not the only, memorial of the Christian Church that once



Fig. 53.

SINGANFU CROSS. (Actual size.)

flourished so extensively throughout Central and Eastern Asia. It was discovered in 1625 in a suburb of Singanfu, which is a populous city of China, and situate on an affluent of the Hoang-ho. The slab upon which the inscription is engraved

in Chinese and Syriac characters bears the date of 781 A. D., and appears to have been intended to commemorate the introduction of Christianity into China in 635 A. D. by the Nestorians. The cross accompanying the inscription is given under Fig. 53.

In one of the isles of western Scotland is found the Oransay Cross (Fig. 54), which is said to have been erected by Saint Colomba in the sixth century. It is still perfect, having successfully resisted the beatings of the storms for ages.

There are many mysterious traditions in the Scottish island of Lewis-with-Harris, one of the Outer Hebrides, which seem to point to an older serpent-worship among the Scandinavian descendants. In fact, the word *righuin*, which throughout the Highlands means a "princess," is applied in the Island of Lewis also to a serpent, the modern explanation being that there prevails some legend of the serpent being a princess metamorphosed. The so-called Druidical stones of Callemish, on this island, are inexplicable memorials, perhaps, of a race that passed away in silence before history began to speak. They are long rows of pillars of unwrought gneiss, which meet in a common centre, which is also a circle of pillars with a chief stone sixteen feet high. The natives call them *Tuirsachan*, which signifies the "place of mourning," or *Firbhreige*, "false men," — both of which names "should be of some interest to antiquarians, as they will suit pretty nearly any theory." There are in all forty-eight stones, the circle is forty-two feet in diameter, and the approaches to it form a cross.



Fig. 54. — THE ORANSAY CROSS.

In Ilkley, England, are three ancient "Runic crosses," so called,—for people insist upon calling such old monuments crosses, though they have none of the characteristics, except the main shaft or pedestal. There are more of these vertical shafts to be found at Kirk Bradon, in the Isle of Man, and one of them is surmounted by the fragment of a cross (Fig. 55). Like those of Ilkley, this monument is covered with Runic letters, figures of birds and hares and of the human form, and various nondescript designs intertwined with coils of serpents or scrolls of ancient characters. In one of the Ilkley monuments there is a sculpture of a man contending with a two-footed dragon. Beginning with Indra's contest with Vritra in ancient Sanskrit mythology, the widespread fable has passed on, to become Apollo and the Python in one country, Siegfried and Fafnir in another, Saint Patrick and the snakes in Ireland, to stamp finally on every English sovereign the legend of Saint George and the Dragon. Are not all but shadowy legends of that religion which was inscribed on the cradle-side of our infancy in the East,—the eternal conflict between Good and Evil, between Man and the Serpent? The Manx cross bears on one side a Norse inscription which may be interpreted: "Thorlef Neaki erected this cross to Fiack, his



Fig. 55.—MANX CROSS.

son, the nephew of Jahr." There are seven of these curious monuments, but this is the most thoroughly Scandinavian of all in the island.

Marco Polo in his book mentions that on his voyage in 1270 A.D. to the kingdoms of Kublai Khan and Prester John, he passed through the province of Tonocain, "where the people of the country tell you was fought the battle between Alexander and King Darius," and "where is found the *Arbre sol* which we Christians call *Arbre sec*." Polo doubtless confounded the *Arbre sol* of Alexandrian romance with the *Arbre sec* of Christian legend. The former plays an important part in the cyclus of Alexandrian fable as the oracular Tree of the Sun that foretold Alexander's death. The latter corresponds most probably with the legendary oak of Abraham at Hebron. The illustration in Polo's book resembles strikingly the Toltec Tree of Life. (See Fig. 76.)

II.

The Cross in the Occident.

II.

In the Occident.

PASSING now from the world called Old to the world called New, over an ocean whose stormy billows were thought to present an impassable barrier to wandering mankind, we find the monuments and remains of prehistoric races in the western hemisphere plentifully sprinkled with the sacred symbol. The Spaniards who conquered New Spain in the name of the Cross were astonished to find the holy emblem of their own faith already an object of worship in the temples of Anahuac. Of the crosses found in Mexico, that of Metztitlan offers the figure of the Greek *tau*; those of Huatulco, Tepic, Cuaotochco, and

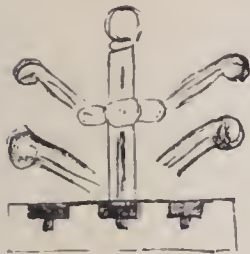


Fig. 56.
THE SPEAKING CROSS.

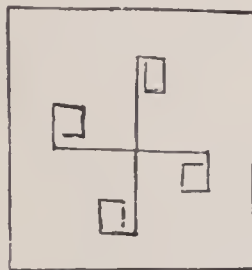


Fig. 57.
NICARAGUA CROSS.

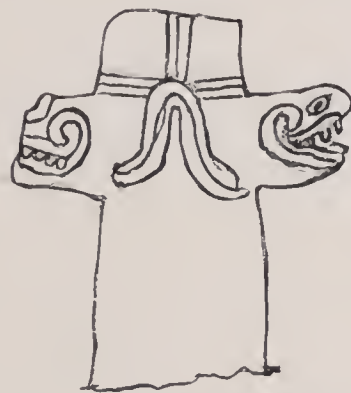


Fig. 58. — CROSS OF SERPENTS.

other places, have the Latin form; those shown in the sandals of the gods in the Tonalamatl, or priestly calendar, are Grecian; and there are innumerable representatives of the Maltese.

The cross shown in Fig. 56 is found in many parts of Mexico. The parrot-like tongues on either side of the central figure signify "speaking," or "discussion."

Fig. 57 represents the cross found by Squier in Central America. The Mexican enthusiast, Orozco y Berra, claims that at first glance it acknowledges its Buddhist origin.

The famous cross of serpents (Fig. 58), now to be seen in the National Museum of Mexico, was called by the Aztecs *Tonacacuahuitl*, "the Tree of the Sun." With them the sign *coatl*, or serpent, was symbolical of the cyclical periods of time. This cross was carved from a basaltic rock.

Twenty-five miles northeast of the city of Mexico are the celebrated "Sun and Moon" pyramids of Teotihuacan, "the city of the Gods." Around these pyramids—which were a thousand years old when Cortez on his first retreat from Te-

nochtitlan marched his handful of Spanish adventurers at their bases—met and mingled the two most ancient civilizations of America, the Nahoas of the North, and the Maya-Quiches of the South. This cross (Fig. 59) indicates three things,—the united worship of Tlaloc, the God of Rain; an astronomical expression of the vernal equinox, summer solstice, autumnal equinox, and

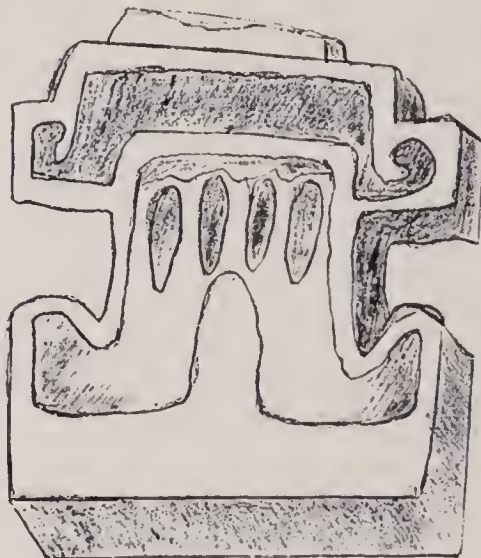


Fig. 59. — CROSS OF TEOTIHUACAN.

winter solstice; and a sign of the grand chronological period of the Toltecs. It is a monument from a single rock.



Fig. 60. — THE SUN OF THE AZTECS.

Fig. 60, copied from the monument of Xochicalco, is the Sun of the Aztecs as most generally represented: it was the foundation of their chronology. In all Mexican monuments it

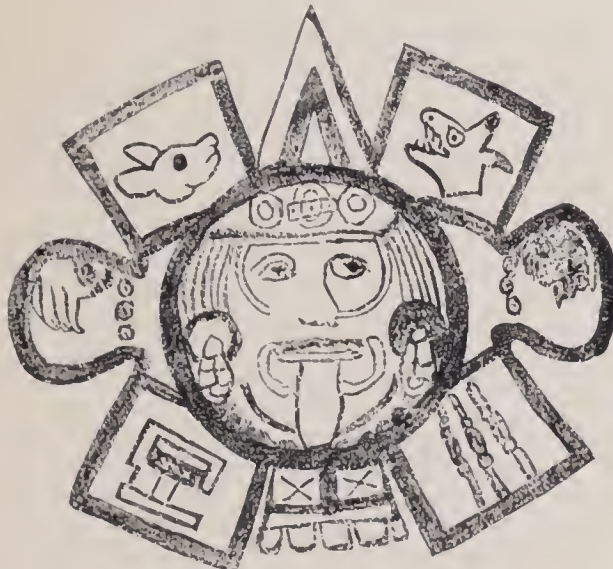


Fig. 61 — THE FOUR AZTEC AGES.

is indicated with protruding tongue, expressing the light and heat pouring upon the earth.

In common with their remote predecessors, the Toltecs, the Mexicans believed in four great Ages, or "Deaths of the Sun." In the second inner circle of the "Aztec Calendar" these four ages are clearly expressed. This calendar is found on the great rock discovered in 1790, and afterwards built against the base of the southwestern tower of the cathedral of the city of Mexico.¹ The four Ages appear as parallelograms around the central face of the Sun (Fig. 61). The Age of Air is shown in the upper left-hand square; that of Fire in the lower left-hand square; Earth in the upper right-hand square; and Water in the lower right-hand square. Using these same four squares to represent the seasons in their complex system, the Aztecs placed Winter in the upper right-hand square, and indicated its strength by the head of an *ocelotl*, or Mexican leopard; Spring, which was the warmest season, in the lower left-hand square, its head indicated by the sign *calli*, or house, because in the house is the hearth where the fire is preserved; Summer, their season of rains, in the lower right-hand square, its waters indicated by the sign *acatl*, or reed; and Autumn in the upper left-hand square, its harvest indicated by the sign *tochtli*, or rabbit. With the "deaths" of the first three "Suns" had concluded the grand catastrophes that placed the race in danger of perishing; and under this aspect the conclusion of the fourth Age was still some cycles distant. But the Mexi-

¹ In the month of September, 1885, it was removed to the National Museum. Its weight is 53,790 lbs. avoirdupois.

cans in their pride made an innovation by inventing a fifth Sun, which should pertain to them alone. They, who wished to have a place designated by the gods as a heaven for themselves alone, and to be a chosen and peculiar people, wished also a Sun of their own. Accordingly, on the day in which for the first time they trod the islet in the lake where now is the city of Mexico; on the day in which they beheld, in the spot where now is the public fountain in the Plaza of Santo Domingo, the eagle posed upon the cactus with the serpent in its claws, with the blue sky above and the blue waters beneath,—there upon the heads of that devoted group of pilgrims the Sun of the Fifth Age poured from the high heavens its flood of golden light!

The *Nahui-Ollin* of the Aztecs, as represented in Fig. 62, is their conventionalized idea of the apparent motion of the sun, which caused the annually returning seasons of spring, summer, autumn, and winter.

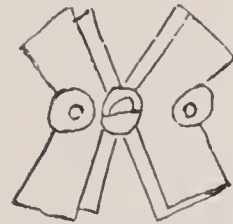


Fig. 62.
NAHUI-OLLIN.

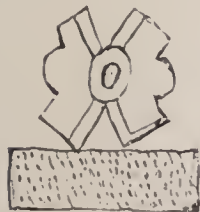


Fig. 63.
EARTHQUAKE.

The Mexican pictograph, Fig. 63, is composed of the mimic sign *tlalli*, "earth," and the ideograph *ollin*, "motion," — the whole representing an earthquake. The varying sizes of the *ollin* gave indications of the force and duration of the shock, and the repetition of the sign, as in Fig. 64, told the times that the phenomenon was repeated on any occasion.

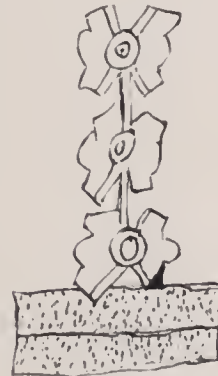


Fig. 64.
THREE SHOCKS

Fig. 65 is the hieroglyphic name of the ancient Mexican mining town of Teocuitlatla, "where gold



Fig. 65.
TEOCUITLATLA.

abounds." The connection between the hieroglyphic and its interpretation is interesting. The small central figure of the cross recalled the idea of the sun; the dots surrounding it were excretions of the same; gold was an excrement of the sun, as silver was of the moon, — hence this highly conventionalized symbol of a place where gold was abundant.



Fig. 66.
YUCATAN PENDANT.

The necklaces of shell, with their pendant crosses, found sculptured on the monuments of Yucatan were first given to the light by Lord Kingsborough in his sumptuous work. Fig. 66, with its equal arms, is purely Greek, while the T-shaped Fig. 67 is Egyptian.



Fig 67.
YUCATAN PENDANT.

Punishment by means of the cross was known to the ancient Tlaxcalan Republic. Fig. 68 is taken from one of their pictographs. The victim did not die from starvation and exhaustion, but was killed by arrows shot into his body from a little distance by the executioner.

The cross found in the State of Chiapas, Mexico (Fig. 69), represents the capital punishment of a god whose head-dress greatly resembles those of the androsphinxes in Egypt. It

is believed that idols of clay were made of this figure, as to-day there exists no ancient copy of it, but only the mould carved into a solid rock. From this it is deduced that the image was that of a god whose effigy was much reproduced and revered.

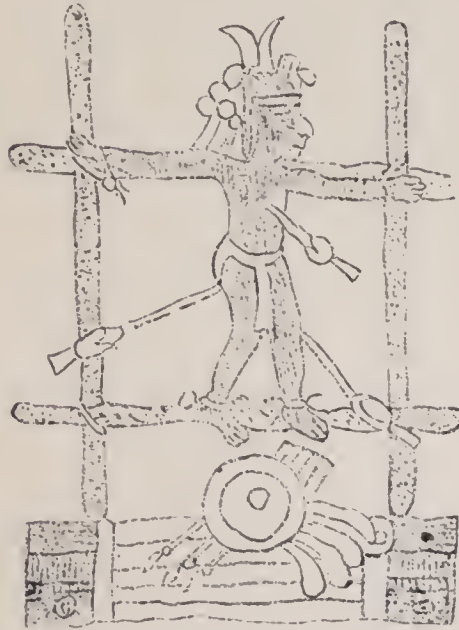


Fig. 68. — TLAXCALAN CROSS.

At the close of the fifth century of our era were erected colossal monuments in Nachan, Yucatan. Nachan was thenceforward called Palemke, "the City of the Priests," as it means in the Quiche tongue. The ruins of this great city were not discovered by the Spaniards until the year 1750, and were not explored until nearly a century later. They are situated in a dense tropical forest. The Indian Palemke has been very improperly modernized or euphonized into the Cas-

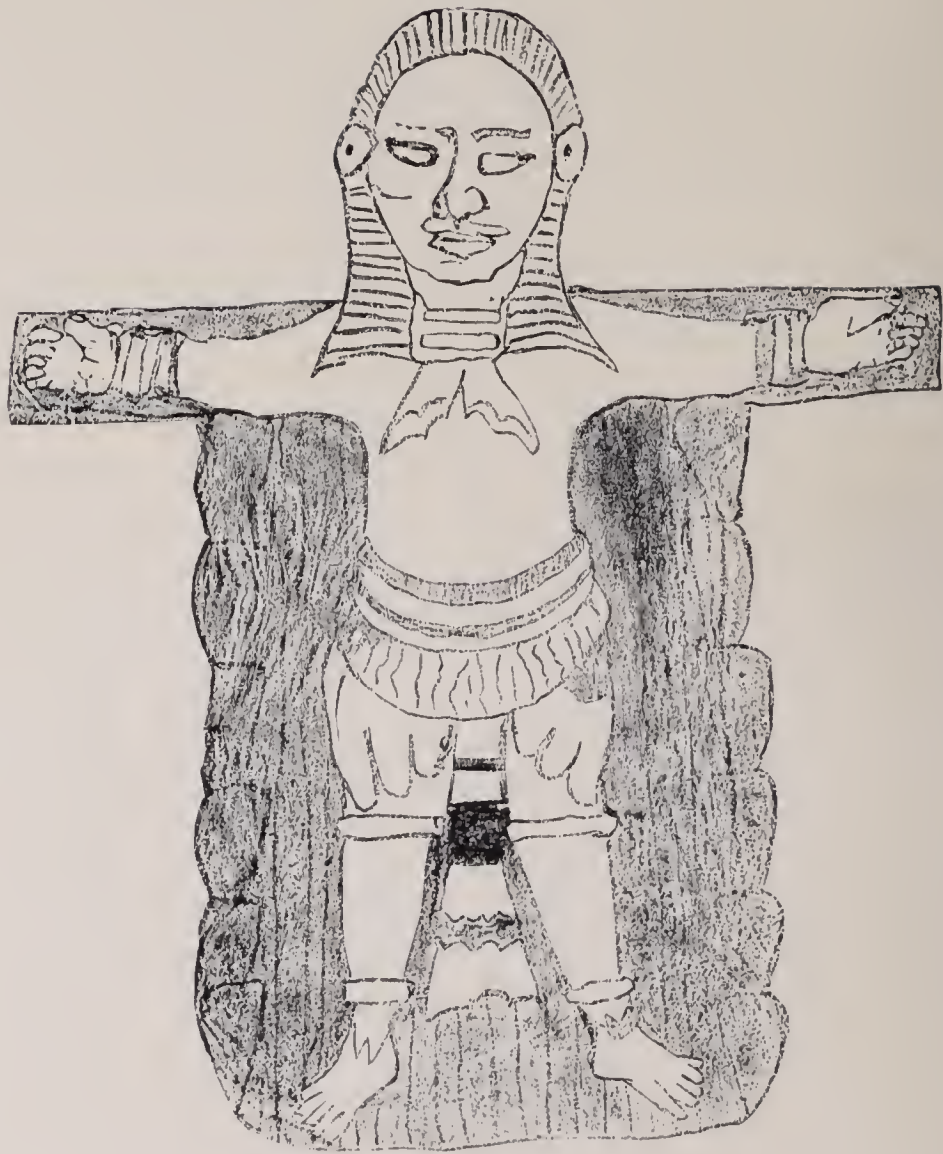


Fig. 69. — QUICHE CRUCIFIXION.

tilian Palenque, "palisade," or "enclosure made with palings," — thus losing sight of the real significance of the word. Among these immense ruins are found vast artificial terraces of cut stone surmounted by solid edifices, often three stories in height, and covered with all manner of figures in bold relief. Many of the colossal statues, carved on huge slabs of stone, more nearly resemble Grecian than Hindoo or Egyptian art. In the "Temple of the Cross" stood three mural tablets covered with hieroglyphics. One of these slabs is now in the Smithsonian Institution at Washington; the central stone, containing the famous cross and one of its attendant priests, has been recently placed on exhibition in the new hall of the National Museum of Mexico; and the remaining one is in Palenke. Each tablet is over six feet high, is four feet wide, and six inches thick. The cross (see Frontispiece) stands on a pedestal in the midst of a complication of hieroglyphics. The priest, with features and vesture marvellously Asiatic, stands perfectly erect with outstretched arms and open lips, offering a child and praying to the cross. The bird above the cross is the *quetzal*, the Star of the Morning. The singular figure beneath the pedestal was distinguished in 1750 as being a skull; it would therefore represent *miquiztli*, the Star of the Evening. The four small characters that stand separately, two on each side of the cross, are the four initial signs or chronographs of the epoch in which it was sculptured. The temple of Palenke and its most wonderful monument — which is an astronomical symbol and a figurative sign of the grand chronological period of eight thousand years — were dedicated

to the Sun as the great creative power, to the Year as the producer of the rains, and to the maximum period of Time.

Much attention has recently been directed to the cross of Mayapan (Fig. 70); but its presence among a people who worshipped Kukulcan is not surprising. Kukulcan was the Yucatan deity whom the Aztecs called Quetzalcoatl, "the plumed serpent." He is the mythical island missionary, white and bearded, who appeared in the first century to the dwellers of Tula, having his clothes covered with red crosses. He taught the religion of peace, ascended to heaven from the pyramid of Cholula, and became the planet Venus, or the god of Air. As the bird *quetzal*, he is seen resting on the Palemke cross.



Fig. 70.
CROSS OF MAYAPAN.



Fig. 71.
TARASCAN
AMULET.

The Tarascan tribe of Indians in the Province of Michoacan, Mexico, made crosses of thin copper sheets, in the form of Fig. 71, before the days of the Spanish Conquest, and wore them as amulets. The Tarascans called this cross "Tomini;" the Aztecs called it "Tamu." Some philologists find a connection between these words and the Tammuz of Babylon. In the Vatican at Rome there is preserved an Aztec painting (*Codex Vaticanus*, cxxviii.) representing the Emperor Montezuma on his way to inaugurate the temple of Huitzilopochtli, the god of war, in the year 1501. At the head of the procession are seen two red crosses.

The Zapotec tribe of Indians in Oaxaca, Mexico, used in lieu of money an anchor-like crescent of thin copper (Fig. 72). In the year 1795 a laborer, ploughing in a field near Antequera, unearthed a large pot containing twenty-three dozens of these "coins." From this deposit all the world's museums have been supplied with specimens.



Fig. 72.
ZAPOTEC MONEY.



Fig. 73.
MEXICAN CROSS.

Fig. 73 is met with in numerous places in Mexico. It resembles the Palemke cross. (See Frontispiece.)

Fig. 74 is a design found on the antique pottery of Mexico which has attracted some attention, owing to its similarity to the Mound Gorget of Fig. 92.



Fig. 74.
MEXICAN
CROSS.

Fig. 75 represents a ray of the sun traversing a circle. It is a chronograph by which the ancient Zapotecs expressed the word "year."



Fig. 75.
THE YEAR.

The cruciform tree which occurs several times in the ancient Agave manuscripts has been interpreted by Chavero as the hieratic representation of the fecund virtue of the solar rays. It is the "Tree of Life" of the Toltecs. To us, the diagonals on the trunk represent the circulation of the blood. Its vitality is manifest by arrows, by rays of the sun, and by the figure of the creator-god, Xiuhtleli, above the cross. At the foot of the tree, beneath the priests who stand

on either side, are two globes with horns of *cipactli*, or light, representing the Morning and Evening Star. The whole is designed as a pleonastic symbol of Life. One of the best examples of this representation of the "Tree of Life" is in the *Codex Vienna*. Fig. 76 is a copy of the upper part of the tree, showing the form of the cross.



Fig. 76. — TREE OF LIFE.

The Aztec astronomical calendar is full of prodigious and hidden combinations which we cannot here attempt to interpret. Five Mexican cycles, of fifty-two years each, composed the great period of two hundred and sixty years; and four of these periods made up the Age, or Sun, of one thousand and forty years. We give, in Figs. 77 to 80 inclusive, the symbol for each of these four periods. There is, moreover, sculptured in relief in one of the many monuments of Mexico what at first glance appears to be a five-pointed star (Fig. 81). It is really the Sun with five rays. Each of these rays represents a cycle of fifty-two years, the whole making their chronological period of

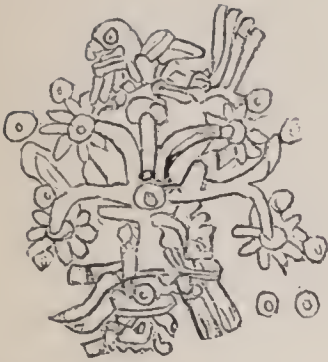


Fig. 77.

FIRST MEXICAN PERIOD OF 260 YEARS



Fig. 78.

SECOND MEXICAN PERIOD OF 260 YEARS.

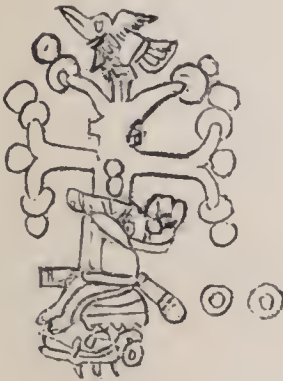


Fig. 79.

THIRD MEXICAN PERIOD OF 260 YEARS.



Fig. 80.

FOURTH MEXICAN PERIOD OF 260 YEARS.



Fig. 81. — GENERAL MEXICAN PERIOD OF 260 YEARS

two hundred and sixty years. The twenty glyphs of the inter-



Fig. 82.

MAYA, PERIOD OF 8000 YEARS.

mediate vanes, moreover, give us twenty cycles, or the Age of one thousand and forty years.

The Mayas of Yucatan indicated their greatest chronological period of eight thousand years by the Teutonic cross of Fig. 82. In their hieroglyphic literature they generally used Fig. 83 as a graphic manner for representing this same number, since the

purse was supposed to hold eight thousand chocolate beans,—the currency of those times.

There still exists in the ruins of Nachan, near Palemke, in Yucatan, a monolith (Fig. 84), which is interesting for its good proportions and fine workmanship, and for its character, which appears Egyptian. The statue is of life size, and has a grand head-dress of most rare figure, in the manner of a mitre forming a cross. On the throat is seen a wide collar. It holds in its



Fig. 83.

MAYA PURSE.

breast with its right hand an object that can be taken as a musical instrument, while it holds in its left hand a medallion that forms the upper part of a *maxtli*, adorned with symbolic figures. The statue indisputably is clothed with a shirt and leggings, and apparently has buskins on its feet. It stands upon a pedestal, on which is sculptured in relief a hieroglyphic, — without doubt the name of the deity; but to this day not interpreted. The sides of the rock are finely carved; but not so the posterior portion, which causes the belief that the statue originally projected from a wall.



Fig. 84.

NACHAN MONOLITH.

Professor W. H. Holmes, of the Smithsonian Institution at Washington, published, in the Second Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, a paper upon "Art in Shell of the Ancient Americans." Professor Holmes, whose skill as an artist is only surpassed by his scientific attainments, makes in this paper a valuable contribution to ethnological knowledge. He is the personification of caution in his statements, but respecting the works of the Mound-builders says: "I have



Fig. 85.
FAIN'S ISLAND, TENN.

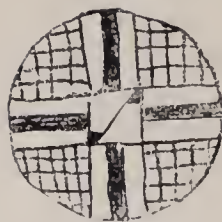


Fig. 86.
LICK CREEK, TENN.

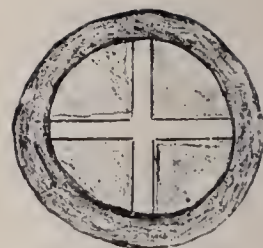


Fig. 87.
OHIO COPPER DISK.



Fig. 88.
UNION COUNTY, ILL.

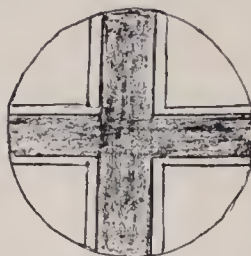


Fig. 89
CHARLESTON, MO.

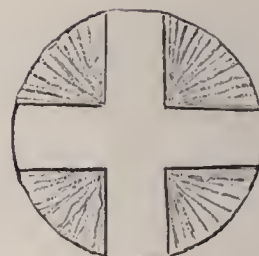


Fig. 90.
MISSISSIPPI CROSS AND SUN.



Fig. 91.
BELLEVILLE, ILL.



Fig. 92.
NEW MADRID, MO

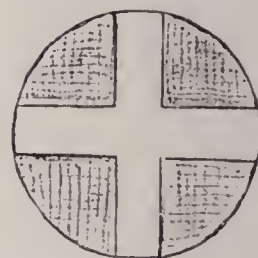


Fig. 93.
ST. CLAIR COUNTY, ILL.

not seen a single example of engraving upon shell that suggested a foreign hand, or a design, with the exception of this one [the cross], that could claim a European derivation. . . . If written history does not establish beyond a doubt the fact that the cross had a place in our aboriginal symbolism, we have but to turn to the pages of the great archaeological record, where we find that it occupies a place in ancient American art so intimately interwoven with conceptions peculiar to the continent that it cannot be separated from them." Let us look at some of his examples of this emblem obtained from the districts once occupied by the Mound-builders.

The cross, as shown in Fig. 85, is engraved on a shell gorget found on Fain's Island, Tennessee.

Fig. 86 is a typical example, and obtained from a mound on Lick Creek, Tennessee.

Fig. 87 is engraved on a large copper disk from an Ohio mound.

Fig. 88 is from a mound in Union County, Illinois.

Fig. 89 represents a large shell cross that was sent to the National Museum at Washington, inside of a skull obtained from a grave at Charleston, Missouri.

Fig. 90, found in an ancient sepulchre in Mississippi, is a remarkable combination of two symbols, — the cross and the sun. It is engraved on a "bird" gorget, and probably was worn as a priestly charm.

A highly conventionalized cross on a "spider" gorget, obtained from a mound in Illinois opposite the city of St. Louis, is seen in Fig. 91.

A similar gorget, Fig. 92, was excavated from a mound near New Madrid, Missouri.

Fig. 93 is from a stone grave, and came from the same neighborhood as Fig. 91.

The looped figure which is of frequent occurrence in Mexican manuscripts, is also found on many shell gorgets from the North American mounds. Mr. Holmes suggests that it may represent an enclosure, a limit or boundary. A cross (Fig. 94) occupies the enclosed area in nearly all examples.

A cross of the Greek type in a star or sun, enclosed in a looped rectangle, is seen in Fig. 95. It is from a "bird" gorget found in a stone grave in Tennessee.

The dots of the arms and circle of Fig. 96 suggest an Aztec affinity. Schoolcraft says it was found in an ancient Indian grave in New York State.

The peculiar examples of Figs. 97, 98, and 99 were painted upon pottery excavated from ancient mounds.

The modern Zuñi Indians of New Mexico decorate their water vases with very grotesque designs. Fig. 100 is more symmetrical than usual with these decorations.

The Zuñis also mark their ceramics with Fig. 101,—the emblem of procreation and fertility. Its resemblance to the Hindoo symbol is startling.

This same interesting tribe of Pueblo Indians worship their sacred water-fly, or "devil's darning-needle" of the frontiersmen. This is a species of dragon-fly of the family *Libellulidæ*. The conventional symbol is a cross, Fig. 102.

Fig. 103 is painted upon a gourd-rattle used to-day in the

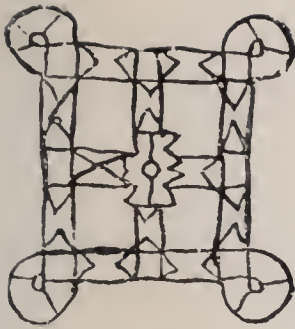


Fig. 94.
LOOPED FIGURE.

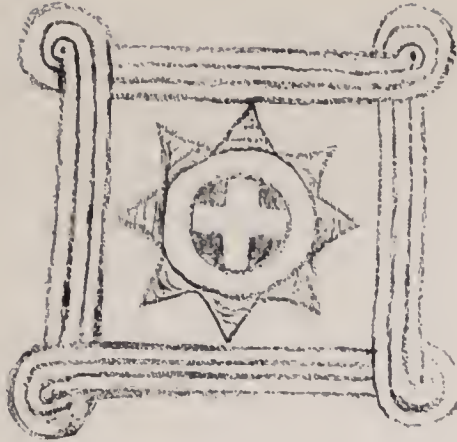


Fig. 95.
LOOPED FIGURE AND GREEK CROSS.

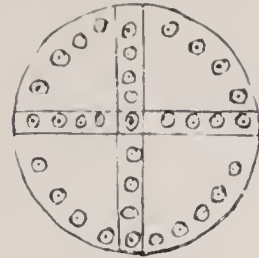


Fig. 96.
RUNTEE.

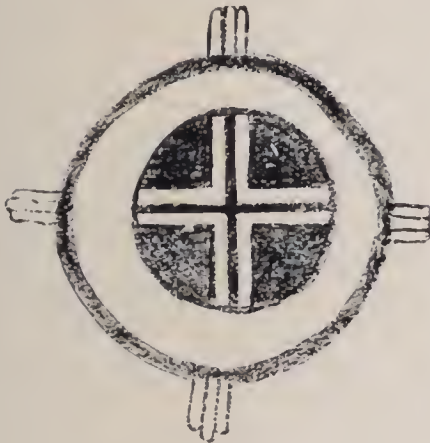


Fig. 97.
MOUND POTTERY.

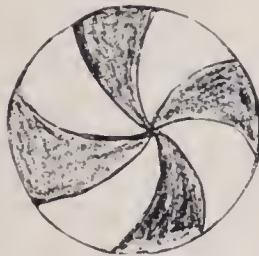


Fig. 98.
MOUND POTTERY.

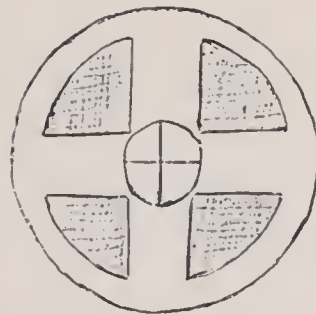


Fig. 99.
MOUND POTTERY.



Fig. 100.
ZUÑI CROSS.



Fig. 101.
ZUÑI EMBLEM
SACRED WATER-FLY.
OF FERTILITY.



Fig. 102.



Fig. 103.
WOLPI CROSS.

religious dances of the Wolpi (ancient Hualpai) Indians of Arizona.

Let us close our study with a brief examination of the celebrated cross, Fig. 104, preserved until recent times in a convent of Merida. This cross came from the Island of Cozumel, off the coast of Yucatan; and the early monks claimed that it had been originally worshipped by the natives. Stephens, in his "Travels in Yucatan," very justly reasoned that this was impossible. He considered the claim of the friars as fraudulent and as "completely invalidating the strongest proof offered at this day that the cross was recognized by the Indians as a symbol of worship." Prescott, in his "Origin of Mexican Civilization," well says that this inference "is by no means admissible. Nothing could be more natural than that the friars in Merida should endeavor to give celebrity to their convent by making it the possessor of so remarkable a monument as the very relic which proved, in their eyes, that Christianity had been preached at some earlier date among the natives. But the real proof of the existence of the cross as an object of worship in the New World does not rest on such spurious monuments as these, but on the unequivocal testimony of the Spanish discoverers themselves." The true history of the Cozumel cross is found in a very rare and valuable book, "*Informe contra Idolorum Cultores del Obispado de Yucatan*," written by Dr. Pedro Sanchez de Aguilar, dean of the cathedral of Madrid, and published by him in that city in 1639. The Canon mentions that Cortez, after he met the escaped captive Jeronimo de Aguilar — who did such signal

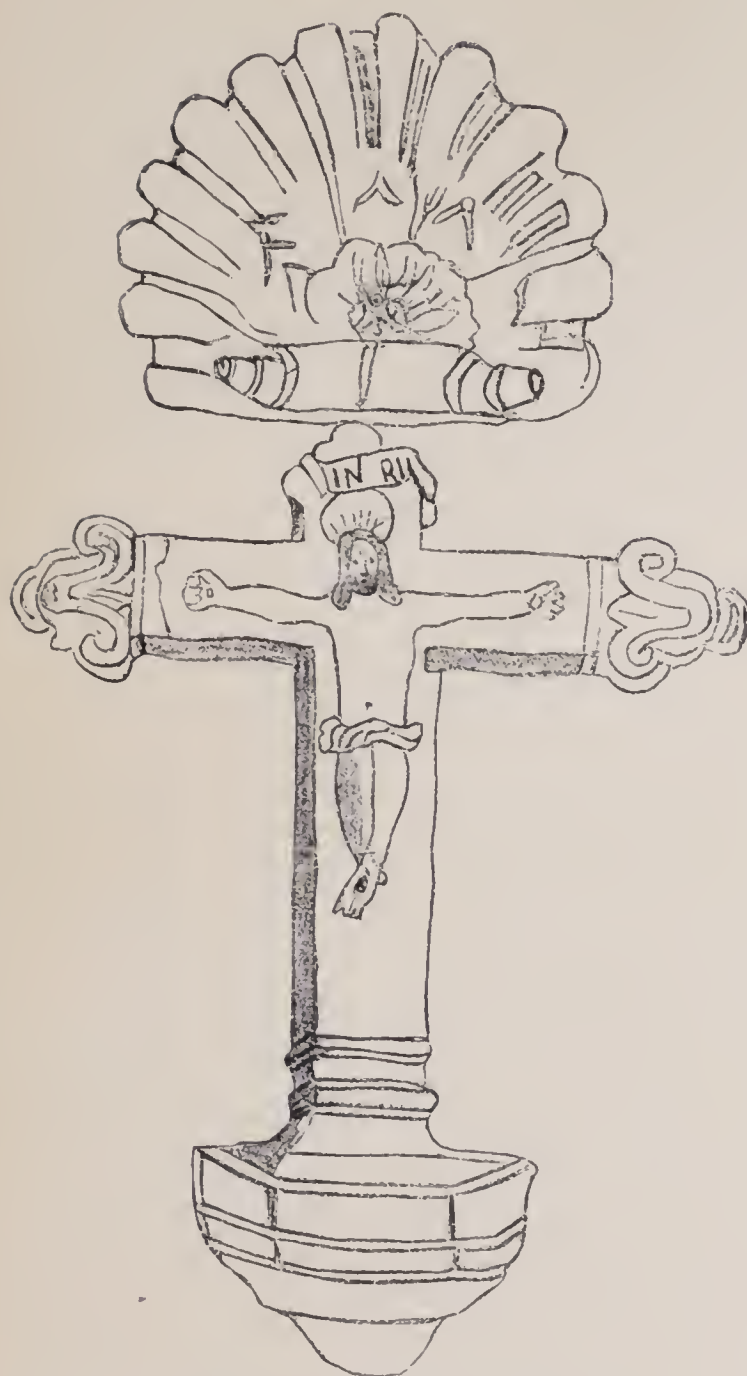


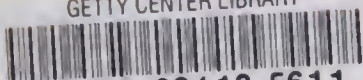
Fig. 104. — THE CROSS OF COZUMEL.

service as an interpreter — in the Island of Cozumel, “there erected a cross and commanded the natives to worship it, when he passed on to New Spain with his armada.” Governor Diego Fernandez de Velasco removed this cross to Merida in the year 1604. The worthy dean further advises that “a native pagan priest named Chilan Cambal took this cross as a theme for a poem in his own tongue referring to the arrival of the Conquerors.” This was ten years before Governor Montejo returned to conquer the Peninsula; and, consequently, the Spaniards — not knowing or remembering that Cortez had touched at Cozumel Island in the year 1519 — “thought that the Indians had raised this cross in remote times, and that the poem of Chilan Cambal was a prophecy.” *Hæc fabula docet* a very important fact, and one that we must always take into account in the study of Aztec traditions, — that in the first days of the Conquest the Indians mixed in their own records a great deal of what they were learning from the Spaniards. Therefore the antiquarian must carefully winnow the grains of truth from the chaff of marvellous stories written by the chroniclers of that period.

THE END.



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